



Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs

(860) 390-1412
PO Box 232
Clinton, CT 06413

Testimony in Support of SB 4 and HB 5039

AAC The Connecticut Clean Air Act

AAC Medium and Heavy Duty Vehicle Standards

To: Honored Chairs Sen. Haskell and Rep. Lemar, Vice Chairs Sen. Cassano and Rep. Simms, Ranking Members Sen. Somers and Rep. Carney, and Distinguished Members of the Transportation Committee

From: Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs

On behalf of the Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of both SB 4, An Act Concerning The Connecticut Clean Air Act, and HB 5039, An Act Concerning Medium and Heavy-Duty Vehicle Standards.

The Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs builds alliances among diverse constituencies to combat climate change, create jobs and promote racial, economic, and climate justice. The Roundtable seeks to build a worker-oriented environmental movement committed to securing a fair and just transition that protects not only the environment but also the livelihoods of workers and their communities.

Transportation is the most significant source of greenhouse gas emissions in Connecticut, accounting for 37.4% of total emissions. The state's most recent greenhouse gas emissions report, released by CT DEEP in September 2021, demonstrated that Connecticut is failing to meet emissions reduction targets despite significant progress in the electricity sector.¹ The report stated unequivocally that "Connecticut must enact policies to significantly reduce transportation emissions in order to meet the state's overall emission goals" (p.4). Both SB 4 and HB 5039 are important climate bills that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution from the transportation sector.

SB 4 An Act Concerning The Connecticut Clean Air Act - Support and suggest modifications

SB 4 would accelerate the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) to reduce transportation emissions by requiring the state to lead by example and electrify its light-duty vehicle fleet by 2030, requiring the state to end the procurement of diesel buses, increasing incentive funding for the purchase of electric vehicles with a priority to fund EV adoption by low-income households and residents of environmental justice communities, expanding access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure, establishing a matching grant program to help deploy electric

¹ https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GHG_Emissions_Inventory_2018.pdf

school buses throughout the state, setting targets goals to achieve a 100% electric school bus fleet, and more.

The electrification of school buses, which are typically run on diesel and are known to idle outside of schools and in residential areas, are a particularly important priority. It is well established that diesel exhaust concentrations inside the school bus typically exceed ambient levels outside the bus, making the health risks highest for drivers and student passengers. Furthermore, children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution because they breathe more rapidly than adults, resulting in greater absorption of pollutants at a time when their brains and bodies are still developing.

Suggested Modifications to Strengthen SB 4

In Section 1(c), we suggest that the requirement that the state ceases procurement of diesel buses by 2024 be additional to, rather than replace, the requirement that “at least thirty per cent of all buses purchased or leased by the state shall be zero-emission buses” on and after January 1, 2030, particularly since the Commissioner of Administrative Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Transportation is directed to develop a plan to implement zero-emission buses state-wide. The percentage of zero-emission buses to be purchased or leased by 2030 could be increased, but we think there’s a point in eliminating the existing target altogether.

Additionally, as vehicle miles traveled (VMT) are increasing, we suggest that the committee look to Governor Lamont’s Executive Order 21-3 to codify the requirement that CT DOT to develop a plan to dramatically reduce VMT by 2030. While SB 4 does a lot to promote the electrification of our transportation system, shifting our modes of transportation is another important aspect of reducing emissions. Alongside a plan to reduce VMT, we suggest setting a target for CT DOT to double transit ridership by 2030, as recommended by the C40 Cities and the International Transport Workers’ Federation during the UNFCCC COP 26.²

HB 5039 An Act Concerning Medium and Heavy-Duty Vehicle Standards - Support

Although they make up only 6% of vehicles on the road, medium- and heavy-duty trucks and buses account for as much as 53% of smog-forming nitrogen oxides (NOx, an ozone precursor) and are responsible for 25% of the entire transportation sector’s greenhouse gas emissions.

HB 5039 authorizes CT DEEP to adopt two regulations that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution from medium- and heavy-duty vehicles. The Advanced Clean Truck (ACT) rule requires manufacturers to gradually increase the availability of zero-emissions vehicles starting in 2026. The Heavy Duty Omnibus (HDO) rule strengthens NOx and particulate matter emission standards for new fossil fuel trucks to protect public health. It’s time we join our neighboring states, including New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts, to adopt these standards.

² <https://www.c40.org/news/public-transport-cities-decade-1-5c-target/>

While the ACT rule will promote the adoption of zero-emissions vehicles, the HDO rule will help limit the public health impacts of medium- and heavy-duty combustion vehicles as they are phased out. Reducing air pollution from large trucks and buses is an urgent matter that will save lives. It also is an important step in addressing the disproportionate impacts on communities of color and other vulnerable populations located near transportation corridors. And, the technology is ready now. Costs of zero-emission freight trucks and buses are rapidly declining and within just five years, zero-emissions trucks will be *cheaper* (both to purchase and to operate) than their combustion engine counterparts.³

Both SB 4 and HB 5039 are important opportunities to reduce harmful emissions from the transportation sector and transition Connecticut towards a low-carbon economy. We hope the committee understands the urgency of passing these bills, both for climate change mitigation and the protection of public health.

Sincerely,

Aziz Dehkan
Executive Director

Allison Pilcher
Policy Director

Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs
www.ctclimateandjobs.org